

Nollywood inspires Switzerland

Audio-Visual Forms of Self-Representation by African Migrants

Point of Departure

A growing number of young African migrants in Switzerland feel an urgent need to express their views and opinions to the public with the help of new media. This desire of representation mainly derives from their feeling of being under-represented or even misrepresented in the dominant Swiss media discourse. In order to interact with the dominant society they live in, some of these migrants – inspired by their transnational consumption of video films from the Nigerian film industry Nollywood – have started to produce their own films. This Nollywood-inspired use of audio-visual media by African migrants in Switzerland is the point of departure of this study.

Objectives

By studying migrants' self-representations through media anthropological methods, and in particular by employing *Performance Ethnography*, I intend to learn more about the transnational use of audio-visual media. I am especially interested in examining the ways in which the Nigerian video films from Nollywood are applied by African migrant in Switzerland as an inspirational source for their filmmaking. In this respect, I intend to observe in particular how migrants negotiate their concerns among each other and perform their everyday life experiences during a film project which is partnered by a social anthropologist. During this partnership I follow their negotiations closely and expect to find out more about audio-visual forms of (re-)presentation as socially embedded transactions among the group members and in regard to their country of residence, their country of origin, the Nollywood film industry and their lives in the transnational space.

Research Questions

In what ways do African migrants living in Switzerland represent themselves as a community through audio-visual media? How do migrant filmmakers refer to Nollywood and how is Nollywood retained, amended and changed in this process of transnational filmmaking?

Current Project Status

To realize my research idea, I have established a partnership with the African Mirror Foundation. Together with this organization I have initiated the film project "Paradise In My Mind" which is expected to be completed in spring 2015.



photographs: African Mirror Foundation

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